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## American Irish Newsletter - February - March 1988

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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# THE AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the Action Irish

Vol. 13, No. 1

FEBRUARY/MARCH, 1988

## U.S. Congress Be Aware

... that Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) recently visited Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to investigate the use of \$120 million US aid voted by Congress to the International Fund for Ireland after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. According to the *Star Ledger*, Senator Lautenberg was shocked by the treatment afforded Catholics. He stated, "The Catholic community gets the short end of the stick in almost all cases. They desperately need help." Lautenberg, an eyewitness, now supports the MacBride Principles, according to the *Ledger*.

Concern over possible misuse of the Fund monies is now widespread. Complaints have been voiced by the Prime Minister of the Irish Republic. Deep dissatisfaction stemmed from the fact that money is being directed away from poor areas and into areas and projects already well provided for. This means, from the point of view of the Dublin and London governments, that the money will not strengthen the Anglo-Irish Agreement by recreating industry and reducing poverty in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is the second most impoverished area of the European Community.

Dr. Cahal Daly, Catholic Bishop of the most heavily populated area in the north has complained about the unjust allocation of

funds. "I am deeply disappointed," he said, "that the allocation of funds from the International Fund has not taken cognizance of enormous areas of socio-economic blight and unemployment. Some of the funds allocated seem to be a cosmetic exercise."

Dr. Joe Hendron of the SDLP has complained that money given to poor areas "pales into insignificance compared to the 50 million placed in the coffers of the Fund ...". Instead, money is being distributed to areas like Antrim which have a relatively high rate of employment and to the lucrative tourist trade which already is heavily subsidized by government funds. A Councillor in the Republic has asked that some of the money be allocated to his area because, "he understood that already some golf clubs had benefited from the Fund in the north of Ireland."

Self-help groups in industrially impoverished West Belfast, have invited European and American as well as British government representatives to visit the area to reveal how money from the Fund is being spent. One representative has compared this allocation of money to "that made to the Third World much of which ends up in private pockets." Another describes the allocation of money, especially from the United States, as "a major scandal in which some Irish politicians are deeply involved."

Bride. As we mourn his passing and in final tribute to Ireland's greatest statesman of the 20th century, we proclaim 1988 'The Year of the MacBride Principles.' The PEC has called upon all concerned Americans to rededicate themselves to the success of the MacBride Principles campaign ... Statement by the Northern Ireland Fair Employment Trust, January 15, 1988 ... We are deeply saddened by the death of our esteemed and honored patron Mr. Sean MacBride. Just a few days before his final illness Mr. MacBride presided personally at a private meeting with members of the Trust's

(Continued on Page 2)

## NEWS BITS

by Kathy Regan

Sean MacBride, patron of the MacBride Principles, passed away on January 15, 1988. Ireland's greatest statesman, he was the recipient of many awards including the Nobel Peace Prize. As a life-long advocate of justice he was co-founder of Amnesty International. The following message of condolence was transmitted to the MacBride residence in Ireland by the American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC): "We are deeply saddened by the death of our esteemed and honored friend Dr. Sean Mac-

## The New Irish

by Pete Foley, PEC liason to Irish Immigration Reform Movement

In the 1840's, tens of thousands of Irish emigrated to America to escape starvation and poverty. They came for the economic opportunities denied them in their own land. In America most immigrants found more poverty, discrimination, and exploitation. "No Irish Need Apply" signs were found in many places. But there were job opportunities available to them. The new immigrants took the most dangerous jobs building canals, railroads, and mining. In the process, they helped build America to what it is today. To counter the discrimination the Irish played a major part in every war fought by America. They entered politics and the educational system and started much of the American labor movement.

Today there are many more New Irish immigrants coming to America. These New Irish, who are generally well-educated, are again emigrating because of a lack of economic opportunity in Ireland. America has always been held as the land of opportunity for the Irish, but present US immigration policy has put the "No Irish Need Apply" signs up again.

The undocumented Irish are back to the exploitation faced by the earlier immigrants. Twenty-two asbestos removal firms in New York and New Jersey are charged with bribing a federal inspector to ignore safety violations. Asbestos fiber is believed to cause cancer and requires special safety equipment for the workers removing the fiber from old buildings. The bribes were paid so the companies could save millions of dollars by not having to comply with safety regulations. Many of these workers are undocumented aliens including many Irish. Another example of exploitation concerns an 18 year-old answered an ad to be a nanny for a wealthy Michigan family. Her employer took her passport and return airline ticket upon arrival and was told she would be turned over to immigration authorities if she didn't do as she was told. She was forced to work 90

hours a week for \$65. She was helped out of her predicament by another Irish immigrant girl who worked for the same family.

In the past many Irish became citizens by serving with the US Armed Forces. They took the oath of citizenship in boot camp. Many fought for the United States, especially during World War II, and then went back to Ireland. That option is no longer available and their children or grandchildren can't legally stay in the US. There is the case of a young Irish girl who is the youngest daughter of a disabled American veteran. She is here working illegally even though her father died at a very young age because of his wounds. The father joined the US Army during the Korean War and became a US citizen. He was seriously wounded and returned to the states where he was unable to find work because of his wounds. Because he could not survive on the small disability pension he received, he returned to Ireland where he died 5 years later. Because he did not live in America for 10 years, his daughter cannot even get a legal work permit. There is a US Veterans of Foreign Wars in Killarney, Ireland.

Irish immigrants have made major contributions to this great nation. They are traditionally hardworking, law-abiding citizens. These facts should not be forgotten by our legislators.

The Sons of Italy and the Polish American National Congress have joined forces with the Irish Immigration Reform Movement to try to change the immigration laws as their members face the same restriction. The Kennedy-Donnelly Bill (S1611) will soon go before the Senate. Please write your US Senators and urge "that they support and promote this bill and any legislation that expands or extends the current Amnesty program." US Senate address is: Hon. \_\_\_\_\_, US Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

## Attention News Media

A leading Northern Ireland advocate of the MacBride Principles will be touring the United States until February 16, 1988. Mr. Oliver Kearney, executive secretary of the Northern Ireland Fair Employment Trust, on his third tour in 10

months, will be testifying before legislative bodies in several states and participating in public forums. For interviews with Mr. Kearney please contact John Finucane (914) 947-2726 (9:30 AM - 1:30 PM EST).

## Oliver Kearney to Speak In The Bronx MacBride Principles Campaign Meeting

In honor of the late Sean MacBride, the American Irish Political Education Committee, will kick-off a major educational campaign to promote the Principles on a national level. We have joined with the Fair Employment Trust in declaring 1988, "The Year Of The MacBride Principles". A meeting to commence this enormous grassroots effort, will take place on February 15, start-

ing promptly at 8 pm. The meeting which is open to the public, will be held at Manhattan College (Bronx, N.Y.), Room #100 in the Hayden Science Building. Oliver Kearney, executive secretary of the Trust, will be the guest speaker. We urge all to attend this most important function. For further information call (212) 365-0213 or (914) 947-2726.

## Don't Blame The People

by Rev. Des Wilson — PEC Belfast correspondent, the director of Conway Mills

**"If you start up a self-help enterprise in West Belfast the government will not help you, it won't direct industry towards you, it will push job-makers away from you, you will get nothing on loan and nothing to help capitalize whatever work you are trying to create, even if the unemployment level should rise above 80% — and in the end, if you should happen to survive, they will send in the troops."**

This was the advice we got from our lawyer when we asked his guidance before opening yet another self-help program in West Belfast. This time it was a good one, a stylish one. Ninety thousand square feet of industrial space lying vacant, and we would build up a network of small enterprises, we would have theater, lecture rooms, day care centers, leisure facilities, management courses for people setting up small businesses, all on one site. The site was the old linen mill and the ownership was to be vested in the local community.

Within two years we were impoverished, insulted, accused of fraud, labelled paramilitaries and cheats in danger of someone blowing up the whole place.

The British government's brand of democracy has a nasty way of making sure that no industrialization will take place in areas where people vote against the government or against its policies.

The lawyer was right. They did nearly everything he predicted. They have not yet sent in the troops to occupy the premise and keep us without jobs or the education to go with them. But they just might. The lawyer knew, because he had gone through it all before.

Our factory was closed for purely political reasons throwing 400 men out of work; four factories were entered one day by British troops, and workers and management told at gun point they had fourteen days to get out. This is the industrial reality of West Belfast under British "democratic" rule.

Indeed in areas of poverty in the north of Ireland it is government policy to destroy people's efforts to help themselves and cynically to refuse to help the people thus made helpless. Community centers have been raided, smashed and closed. Advice centers have been labelled subversive and closed through economic strangulation. Day care centers for children dubbed subversive and a danger to security. Mothers and children in one of the poorest areas in Europe, left with one less impoverished facility. In such a state as Britain has created in north-east Ireland, the only

reason that need be given for such destructiveness is that it is in the interests of national security. Very few people, and certainly not the "respectable" supporters of the British government, ask why Britain's excuse for destroying what poor people do to better themselves, is remarkably like the excuse given by military dictators elsewhere — national security.

In West Belfast alone the British government has caused or presided over the destruction or attempted destruction of more than thirty self-help enterprises. In other impoverished areas the story has been the same. Not only is government development refused, the citizens own work is destroyed.

A number of these projects were created in order to give opportunities to unemployed people to make their own work. In many cases they were designed also to bring together people of different religious backgrounds and political opinions. They were allowed to do neither; after a brief period of independence and invention they bowed under vicious attack. This kind of attack did not come only from the British government directly. It also came from the left-wing Workers' Party, the right of center Social Democratic Labor Party (SDLP), the conservative newspaper the IRISH TIMES, some extreme loyalist groups, and the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Some of whose recently promoted Catholic members vied with their Protestant colleagues to put self-help schemes in Catholic areas out of business.

That so many of the initiatives survived or rose again in another form is due to the resilience of poor people under attack. In face of this resilience and ability to survive — and even at times to thrive in a mild way — the SDLP and the IRISH TIMES began to backtrack and say it was not their policy after all to attack self-help groups. The extreme loyalists, having had a few, but not many, similar experiences, began to look with a more favorable eye on what their Catholic fellow citizens were doing. The Catholic civil servants remained adamant: only ventures promoted by the British government, the SDLP or the Churches were to be trusted, helped or encouraged.

We realized with a shock that the pattern of oppression had been changed and that some of the one-time oppressed were rapidly becoming part of the system of oppression.

It is hard to be resilient against that!

(Ed. Note: The above self-help programs have not received any financial support from the fund created by the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Applications for funding have been filed but have been ignored).

## Presidential Candidates Forum On American Irish Issues

A Presidential Candidates Forum on American Irish issues has been set for March 16, 1988. This major event will take place at Fordham University in the Bronx, NY starting at 1 PM. Presidential candidates from both parties will be invited. Issues to be discussed will include: the MacBride Principles, how US funds are sent to Ireland, and immigration reform. Staff members will not be accepted as representatives of the

candidates. This event is sponsored by all major American Irish organizations.

Admission will be by invitation only. Tickets will be available free of charge and can be obtained by writing to the PEC or calling (914) 947-2726. We ask that each person or organization requesting tickets represent a firm commitment to attend. A large turnout is most important.

THE AMERICAN IRISH  
NEWSLETTER  
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From the Editor

It is clear that the Irish Republic does not enjoy real sovereignty. The current Prime Minister, Charles Haughey, purports to be the most nationalistic of Ireland's recent Prime Ministers. In fact, he does not control the decisions concerning Ireland's foreign policy with respect to Northern Ireland and Britain. Perhaps he would like to do so, but he lacks the ability because of the "reality" of British economic and political pressure.

Mr. Haughey originally opposed both the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the recently approved Anglo-Irish Extradition Treaty. Yet, in the final hour, he reneged and did exactly what the British government wanted.

We can criticize Haughey, but what good will it do? He has already demonstrated that he does not have the will nor power to stand up to the British government. Someone or something else will have to win justice for the Irish nation, perhaps the American people. In America we can develop the necessary clout simply by working together and reaching out to Americans of all ethnic, political and religious persuasions.

Many of the active American Irish organizations, including the PEC, have been reaching out to the Haughey government. We interpreted Mr. Haughey as the "leader" who would move the tiny Irish nation to take a stand against the notorious British colonialism and oppression in Ireland. We offered friendship and a willingness to work with him and his government. Things have changed. Recent events make it clear that the Irish government has different priorities concerning the American Irish. They seek to control our activities and positions — yet they have nothing to offer in return because of their inability to do so. We, on our part, will continue to seek a cordial relationship with Mr. Haughey and his government. We are Americans — not tools of any foreign Government, nor solely the objects of fund-raising or tourist promotion campaigns.

Mr. Haughey does support the MacBride Principles and we are grateful for that. But we wonder — will the British and American governments get him to back off on the Principles?

Our emphasis must remain on exposing the evil of British colonialism. We must continue to unite and move forward through the American democratic process to peacefully resolve "the British problem" in Ireland. We must concentrate our educational efforts on the American people. This is where effective support for justice lies. The American people will be the decisive factor on this issue. You can help us in this effort by supporting our current mass mailing campaign promoting the MacBride Principles (see Urgent ... Urgent on this page).

MacBride Principles Update

by Pat Doherty, Administrative Associate to  
Harrison Goldin, Comptroller, City of New York

This fall British Secretary of State, Tom King, worried over recent successes scored by the MacBride campaign, embarked on a major anti-MacBride lobbying trip to the U.S. King's coast-to-coast itinerary included meetings with US government officials, major business leaders and media representatives. His message was that the British government was now ready to begin a major effort to end employment discrimination in the North, and that the government should be trusted to follow through on their new-found commitment. Pro-MacBride officials, lead by Boston Mayor Ray Flynn and Congressman Joe Kennedy (D-Mass) responded, by pointing out that the British Minister was engaging in a "slick public relations exercise" and not offering anything substantial in the way of reform. King's visit received wide media coverage in Britain and Ireland. The London Independent reported at the end of the tour that King had "failed to stop the (MacBride) bandwagon" and the Irish Times pointed out that the trip had actually helped the MacBride campaign.

These views were seemingly confirmed when, shortly after King's return to Belfast, Prudential-Bache Securities, a major US investment house, issued a report detailing the MacBride campaign's rapid legislative progress. The new report entitled "MacBride Principles Legislation Mushrooms" said that there is now "strong momentum" for further victories.

Recent developments bear out this analysis. In November, the Cleveland city council called on the Ohio State legislature to pass that state's MacBride bill. New legislation has also been introduced in New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, Maryland and the District of Columbia. A number of states and cities are expected to join the list in the new year.

Ireland's Prime Minister, Charles Haughey reaffirmed his government's backing for the Principles this fall in a controversial interview which appeared in Irish America magazine. In the interview which received front-page coverage in Ireland, Haughey said that although Irish diplomats in the US may have lobbied against MacBride in the past, now "the diplomatic corps have no authority or brief to interfere in any way. This government finds nothing wrong with the MacBride Principles." He also criticized John Hume for

taking a different position on this issue.

The Republic of Ireland has also made two recent protests to the U.S. government over the Reagan Administration's position on the MacBride Principles. The first, in September was a formal protest made to Ambassador Margaret Heckler by Foreign Minister Lenihan on behalf of the Irish Cabinet. The Irish, responding to an anti-MacBride Belfast press conference by the U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain, Charles Price, complained that the U.S. was taking Britain's side against Ireland on an issue over which the two countries disagreed.

The second protest, in October, concerned the U.S. State Department distortions of Haughey's MacBride position which were communicated to the Pennsylvania State legislature.

The British Labour Party's Committee on Ireland sponsored a major conference in London on the MacBride Principles on November 28th.

Three hundred delegates, representing major British unions and local Labour Party constituency organizations, heard speakers including Oliver Kearney, Dr. Sean MacBride and Kevin McNamara, Labour's chief parliamentary spokesman on Northern Ireland, attack the Thatcher government's policies on equal employment opportunity.

A major new British government-sponsored investigative survey on discrimination in the North was recently published by the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights. Their report acknowledged that the MacBride Principles have played a constructive part in putting equality of opportunity on the political agenda, and called for reforms going far beyond the Government's present position.

LETTERS ARE NEEDED

**MINNESOTA** — It is urgent that you write and call Senator Donald Moe, Democrat, Chairman of the Senate Governmental Operations Committee, phone # 612 296-4264. His committee is scheduled to hold hearings on the MacBride Principles legislation. We are informed that he is not supportive.

Address: Hon. Donald Moe, Chairman, Senate Governmental Operations Committee, 309 Capitol, St. Paul, MN 55155.

NEWS BITS

(Continued from Page 1)

(Fair Employment Trust) Executive and other interested groups to discuss future strategy for the promotion of human rights in Northern Ireland. He maintained a close personal interest in the promotion of the MacBride Principles throughout the United States. The final personal honor accorded to him in his last days was a testimonial from the state legislature of Maine where a bill enshrining the principles in law is at present under consideration. (AIN-PEC 1/16/88).

Boston's first St. Patrick's Day parade will take place on March 17 at the Boston Common. Organized by the St. Patrick's Day Committee, its purpose is to raise the consciousness of the American public regarding Northern Ireland and to enhance the image of the Irish tri-color. This event is generating much interest and controversy. For information on this major St. Patrick's Day event call Tom Kyd (617) 868-5601 (AIN-PEC 1/88) ...

Maine's senator John Kerry and former governor, U.S. Congressman Joseph Brennan are sponsors of a resolution urging the State of Maine to adopt the MacBride Principles. Senator Kerry led a delegation to meet with local political parties and business interests in Northern Ireland, among them representatives of Sinn Fein and Northern Ireland Secretary Tom King. (Irish Post, 1/9/88) Accompanying Senator Kerry was Shannon Eaton, Maine State Director of the American Irish PEC and organizer of the Maine MacBride Campaign; and David Kerry, Congressional aide to Congressman Brennan.

It appears that history repeats itself. "In December 1972, the Dail, with Jack Lynch then in charge, was debating the Offenses Against the State Amendment Bill — new legislation aimed at curbing the IRA. Fine Gael was opposing it and there was considerable doubt as to the wisdom of it. Then some bombs exploded in the city. The perpetrators were never identified but the effect was unity in the Dail and the prompt

passing of the Offenses Against the State amendment Bill." (Irish Post, 11/14/87) Implementation of the Extradition Treaty was being met with considerable doubt and opposition until the Enniskillen bombing. Then it sailed through easily ... The Campaign Group of Labour MP's is calling for the first time for British withdrawal from Northern Ireland and for Irish reunification. It is the first time it has adopted a policy statement on Ireland saying, "The violence and bloodshed in Northern Ireland stem primarily from the longstanding British occupation" (Irish Post, 12/5/87) ... Belfast Sinn Fein councillor Alex Maskey was detained at Heathrow under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) ... (he was) strip-searched, photographed and fingerprinted. "I was not asked about any violent incident in Britain. Most of the time was spent asking me about my family, the school I attended and my work in Belfast City Council. They even offered to fix me up with a salary and a pension if I worked for them when I returned home. When I refused their offer, I was served with a three-year exclusion order." (Irish Post, 12/12/87) ... From an editorial in the Irish Times — "The truth of security cooperation is that Britain needs the help of the Republic more than the other way around ... There is no reason for the Anglo Irish Agreement to threaten the constitutional position of Unionists in the future ... The Agreement is designed to help reduce support for the IRA inside the minority community." (Irish Post, 12/12/87).

"The Ontario Federation of Labour adopted a resolution supporting the 'application of the MacBride Principles to guarantee equal access to employment for all Northern Ireland workers.' Speakers for the resolution said it was not a sectarian issue, but a matter of rights to which the Canadian labour movement was already committed. A similar resolution may be considered by the Quebec Federation of Labour." (Irish News, 11/26/87)

Sean MacBride (recently deceased) stated that the MacBride Principles have gained widespread support in the U.S. ... Each state that considers a Bill in support

URGENT.....URGENT

Soon you will receive a financial appeal from the American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC). It will be a self-explanatory package promoting the MacBride Principles campaign in the United States. You will be asked to give a donation, write letters, send pre-addressed post cards to your federal legislators, and to become active in promoting the Principles.

We have commenced a mailing campaign designed to reach a minimum of one million Americans of all ethnic, political and religious persuasions during this critical election year. They will receive a mailing similar to your package. This campaign is the most extensive educational effort of its kind ever undertaken by the American Irish community. With your support, it will be a success.

We urge each and everyone of you to support this most urgent appeal. It is your donation and the donations of the people we contact that will keep this campaign alive and successful. No donation will be to small. Please respond as soon as you receive your request. Thank you.

Sample Letter

Dear Mr. Moe:

I urge early hearings on the Northern Ireland Investment Bill #SF722 (MacBride Principles). This bill ask only for equal employment opportunities for all citizens of Northern Ireland. I look forward to your response on this urgent matter.

Sincerely yours,

MacBride Principles  
Promotion Items Available

• A 30 minute VHS on the Principles by Oliver Kearney of the Northern Ireland Fair Employment Trust; includes his talk, an explanation of the Principles, and suggestions as to how one can help promote them. Included are quality brochures on the Principles \$19.95.

• "Say Yes To MacBride Principles" bumper stickers. Cost \$1.00 each (5 or more \$.50 ea.).

To order send your check or money order to AIPEC, Malloy Building, Stony Point, NY 10980.

of the principles conducts very detailed hearings into the situation in Northern Ireland under British rule. This is partly the reason why the British government is so worried by the amount of support for the Principles in the U.S." He believes that much of the animosity that exists in Northern Ireland could be reduced if job discrimination against Catholics is tackled. (Irish Post, 12/5/87)

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# The Irish in Colonial Maryland

# Oliver Kearney and the Price of Free Speech

by Carol DeHaan, PEC, New Jersey

Before his second trip to the United States on behalf of the MacBride Principles of Fair Employment, Oliver Kearney's wife asked, "Does it have to be you?" And he replied, "Brigid, . . . it has to be someone."

With just such determination, during May 1987, Oliver Kearney, Executive Secretary of the Northern Ireland Fair Employment Trust, departed his home in Antrim for America to testify about the long-term, systematic and state sponsored discrimination against Catholics in Northern Ireland.

Such is the intensity of the man, and such the force of his data, that Oliver Kearney triumphed over England's finest lobbyists and brought the New Jersey bill to victory on the first vote, the Connecticut bill to victory after two previous defeats, and had the California bill retained for consideration when its opponents thought it had been killed.

And such was their rage that these opponents then conspired with his employers, the Northern Ireland Vintner's Federation, to deny him a livelihood. Not satisfied with one massive injustice, the authorities then fabricated an excuse to deprive him of the unemployment benefits that are his right after twenty-five years' contribution to the fund. Brigid and Oliver have four sons and a daughter, all students. Of this appalling situation, Oliver says only that his affairs are "in disarray," and fails to mention that his life has been threatened and that his home address was published in the monthly journal of the terrorist Ulster Defense Regiment. What abuses would suffice to provoke one lone man into a head-on confrontation with a debauched system and the government that supports it?

Oliver's first experience with bias occurred when, as a young man, he was hired by a Belfast clothing company. As he left the interview, his new employer called out, " . . . by the way, what is your religion?"

Stung by this rejection, Oliver sought employment with the British Ministry of

Defense and worked ten years, both at Aldergrove and in London. Often promoted, he rose to Personnel Manager of a large Aircraft Maintenance and Engineering Unit.

Needing stability of job location because of a wife and new baby, Oliver served for several years as Personnel Manager of the Northern Ireland Industrial Training Board. He did the same for a chemical manufacturing company.

In response to early 1970's social unrest in the six counties, the British government formed the Housing Executive to remove this function from local authorities. Believing that the state was reformable, Oliver became the Personnel Director of the Housing Executive, with a staff of 45 to 50 people. Much publicity depicted the Executive as "affirmative action at work," and Oliver instituted modest practices of equal opportunity.

In this same period, many professionals demonstrated for civil rights. Knowing first hand the realities of discrimination, and believing that he had the right to free speech, Oliver wrote to newspapers and to Members of Parliament. When violent repression became the state response to the people's demands, and when internment snatched up friends and neighbors, Oliver assisted human rights groups such as the Belfast Citizens' Defense Committee to document British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary violence against civilians, especially during the flight of 8,000 Nationalists from their homes. The Kearney family joined thousands of demonstrators protesting the atrocities in Magilligan Prison and were violently assaulted by heavily armed British troops on a beach near Derry.

During Oliver's eleventh year with the Housing Executive, he began to hear complaints from Loyalist M.P. Harold McCusker of hiring "too many Catholics and too many Republican sympathizers." Refusing to fire Catholics, who had been hired in proportion to the population, Oliver himself was

dismissed as "politically unacceptable."

For the next year, Oliver obtained nothing but an occasional consultant job, although he applied for 120 positions. Constantly informed that he was over-qualified, Oliver concluded he had been blacklisted.

Meanwhile, the MacBride Principles were promulgated in 1984, because fourteen years of British direct rule had failed to remedy Catholic unemployment, which was more than double the rate of Protestant unemployment. Named for Nobel Laureate Dr. Sean MacBride and also sponsored by Protestants Dr. John Robb and Inez McCormack and Roman Catholic Father Brian Brady, these nine standards advocate the kind of affirmative action widely accepted in America. Following the 1985 visit to Belfast by New York City Comptroller Harrison Goldin, who was exceedingly sympathetic to the goal of fair employment, Oliver began to think that the MacBride Principles might be the instrument peacefully to end oppression in the six counties.

Accordingly, he and nine others incorporated the Northern Ireland Fair Employment Trust to advance the MacBride Principles and hopefully to remedy the economic suffering of Catholics. After a year of research, meetings and published reports, the Trust convinced American officials of the routine discrimination against Catholics at British government-owned Shorts Brothers in Belfast, resulting in the U.S. Air Force decision to cancel contract options that might have produced revenues of 300 million pounds.

When MacBride bills were introduced in several state legislatures, Oliver willingly testified. Three trips during 1987 brought him to eleven states and to Washington D.C. He has been such an effective and greatly admired witness to the truth of England's sordid record in Northern Ireland, that the British now fund an office with lobbyists trying to halt the rapid advance of MacBride bills.

REPRODUCE  
AND DISTRIBUTE

Employed as the representative for the Northern Ireland Vintners' Federation since 1986, Oliver learned of remarks made by senior civil servants in the Northern Ireland Office to businessmen and newsmen depicting him as the "prawn cocktail provo," and an "armchair terrorist." Although he has no connection with any political party, Oliver could see what was coming. The letter of dismissal, incredible to an American, declares that Oliver was fired because he "appeared on the *Spotlight Programme* making comments," and "testimony . . . in the California legislature in regard to the MacBride Principles." He was then refused not only a hearing about this dismissal, but also the opportunity to appeal an unfavorable decision. For fear of public controversy, officials of the Licensed Vintners' Federation postponed dealing with Oliver's grievances until after they had secured passage in the British Parliament of a much desired Sunday opening law. The Guinness Corporation, which heavily subsidizes the Federation itself, owns a chain of bars within the Federation, and also exercises a controlling interest in more than 50% of the remaining 1000 privately owned bars in the Federation, publicly denies any complicity in these events.

Ironically, Oliver's only recourse now is to complain to the Fair Employment Agency, whose ineffectiveness gave rise to the MacBride Principles in the first place. Denied unemployment compensation and facing an uncertain future, the Kearney family continues faithfully to support Oliver's work.

(For further information on the MacBride Principles For Northern Ireland Campaign write to: American Irish Political Education Committee, Malloy Building, Stony Point, NY 10980 or call (914) 947-2726.)

## Offensive Situations

by Kevin P. Murphy, PEC Massachusetts

(ED. NOTE: Thank you letter writers for another success. In our last issue we informed you that in Pompano Beach, Fl. the city Parks Commissioner, Timothy Taff, when asked to permit a St. Patrick's Day Festival, responded "that one day of the year that everyone is to become inebriated". We are advised that Mr. Taff, in response to hundreds of letters, has made a public apology.)

Despite being credited with winning America's freedom in the Revolutionary War and contributing in huge numbers to America's defense, and social, political and cultural aspects we American Irish are still depicted as social misfits by some sectors of our society. In recent weeks I received articles from readers of *The American Irish Newsletter* of clearcut examples of anti-Irish stereotyping. A reader from Brooklyn, NY sent me a copy of an editorial cartoon that depicted the American Irish as violent and evil. The editorial cartoon was published by Brooklyn Papers Inc. who print several neighborhood papers in that N.Y.C. borough.

A reader from California sent me a copy of a news article describing a rock video by the Irish band "THE POGUES" that was recently filmed. The video which was filmed for MTV (MUSIC TELEVISION) had a very Irish theme to it, but was heavily stereotypical in depicting the Irish characters as drunks. THE POGUES are a very popular Belfast based band and have made some very good statements opposing British misrule in Ireland. That is why we at the *American Irish Newsletter* are surprised at the tone of their video.

Now with St. Patrick's Day fast approaching we will again be subjected to greeting cards and commercials that depict Irish cultural attributes as consisting only of drinking and misbehavior. No other ethnic group in the United States endures this insulting stereotype. St. Patrick's Day is meant to honor the Patron Saint of Ireland as well as the social and other cultural attributes of Irish people here in America as well as elsewhere in the world. Though companies like HALLMARK GREETING CARD Co. have improved their St. Patrick's Day cards, much more has to be done to end this unjust stereotyping of the American Irish. Some people look at these cards and stereotypes as fun or humorous, but in reality these cards plant into the minds of many Americans that Americans of Irish heritage

are quaint social misfits who really are silly — not to be taken seriously. No other U.S. ethnic group would tolerate this racism and neither should we.

Beer commercials such as "Irish I had a Schlitz," or Budweiser's ad that claims, "There is a little Irish in all of us" compound anti-Irish stereotypes in this nation. We American Irish are a proud people who have contributed far beyond our numbers to the greatness of America. It is high time that St. Patrick's Day be respected by corporate America. 1840's anti-Irish stereotyping should be relegated to history and not promoted by greedy greeting card manufacturers and brewers.

We urge all of you to be careful not to purchase the products of those companies that degrade our proud American Irish heritage. Remember! At the request of the American Irish Political Education Committee, American Greeting Cards discontinued producing offensive St. Patrick's Day cards. We owe it to them to purchase their greeting cards and other products for all occasions. Let us support those producers who respect us. Please pass this information on to your family, relatives, friends, etc. One day your message will stick.

SEND ALL INFORMATION ON OFFENSIVE SITUATIONS TO KEVIN P. MURPHY, PO BOX 8895 — KENNEDY STATION, BOSTON, MA 02114

## Action Letter

by Albert Doyle

Although most of the recent legislative success we have had in connection with the MacBride Principles has been at the state and local level, we should not forget that federal legislation is also pending. Our first aim should be to seek hearings on these proposals — hence, this month's Action Letter to Congressman Lee Hamilton, head of the Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee which has jurisdiction over the bill. It is also most helpful if residents of the Districts of the Subcommittee members write directly to their own Congressman. The members are as follows:

Lee H. Hamilton, Indiana  
Tom Lantos, California  
Robert G. Torricelli, N.J.  
Lawrence J. Smith, Florida  
Mel Levine, California  
Edward F. Feighan, Ohio  
Gary L. Ackerman, N.Y.  
Wayne Owens, Utah  
Benjamin A. Gilman, N.Y.

Jon Meyers, Kansas  
Donald E. Lukens, Ohio  
Doug Bereuter, Nebraska  
Christopher H. Smith, N.J.

(Your address and date)

Hon. Lee Hamilton  
Chairman, Subcommittee on  
Europe and the Middle East  
House Foreign Affairs Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Sir:

As an American who wants our government to promote fair employment practices by U.S. businesses in Northern Ireland, I urge you to conduct hearings on H.R. 722, the *Northern Ireland Fair Employment Practices Act*. Enactment of this legislation would be a step in the direction of ending the cycle of deprivation for the minority community in Northern Ireland. The existing economic apartheid there has been a feature of Britain's colonial regime for too long.

Sincerely,

PEC OFFICE HOURS 10 AM - 2 PM E.S.T. (Monday thru Friday)

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